

## For Immediate Release

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### Protecting Vulnerable Kansans from Extreme Heat

**Topeka**—Triple digit temperatures can spell danger for the elderly and those with disabilities, that's why the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) is urging residents to use caution and keep a close eye on their loved ones and neighbors.

The National Weather Service continues to issue excessive heat warnings across Kansas as high temperatures and humidity plague the state. An excessive heat warning means that a prolonged period of dangerously hot temperatures will occur. The combination of hot temperatures and high humidity creates a dangerous situation in which heat illness is likely and can be life threatening.

"Many of us take our air conditioned offices and homes for granted," said KDADS Secretary Shawn Sullivan. "There are plenty of people in our community who are suffering from the heat without air conditioning and they need our help."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the elderly are more prone to heat stress than younger people for several reasons:

- Elderly people do not adjust as well as young people to sudden changes in temperature.
- They are more likely to have a chronic medical condition that changes normal body responses to heat.
- They are more likely to take prescription medicines that impair the body's ability to regulate its temperature or that inhibit perspiration.

Those with disabilities are also at risk for heat related illnesses and require regular supervision.

### **How to Help Protect Vulnerable Residents**

- Visit older adults and those with disabilities at least twice a day and watch them for signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke (heavy sweating, paleness, muscle cramps, tiredness, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea or vomiting, fainting, a fast and weak pulse rate and fast and shallow breathing).
- Encourage them to increase their fluid intake
- Take them to air-conditioned locations

### **What You Can Do for Someone with Heat Stress**

- Seek shade for the person
- Cool the person rapidly
- Monitor the person's temperature until the body temperature drops to 101-102 degrees.
- Get medical assistance as soon as possible.

*The Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services promotes the security, dignity and independence of Kansas seniors and those with disabilities.*

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